COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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"To all these points we beg the best attention of your honourable House. We beseech you to pursue with "effect what you began with so much honour. We entreat you not to relax in your efforts till you "have brought VISCOUNT MELVILLE to condign punishment, and given to all, *who shall be found to have* "*committed similar crimes*, a signal demonstration, that, in the *representatives of the people*, instead of abet- "tors of their iniquities, they will find only the *faithful guardians* of the nation, and the zealous vindica- "tors of the laws."—PETITION OF THE ELECTORS OF WESTMINSTER, seconded by MR. FOX, and presented to the House of Commons by him, on the 3d of May, 1805.

TO THE

ELECTORS OF WESTMINSTER.

LETTER I.

GENTLEMEN,—A year and some few days have now passed, since we (for I was one amongst you) met in Palace-Yard, upon the subject of the proceedings then going forward, in the House of Commons, against Lord Viscount Melville. I need not recal to your minds the marks of approbation, with which, on that day, we received the speech of MR. FOX; and, more especially that part of it, where he expressed *his suspicions as to the sincerity* of the ministers, who had just then proposed to establish a board of Commissioners for the purpose of inquiring into the abuses in the MILITARY Department. Consonant, in principle, with this speech of Mr. Fox, was the Petition, which we resolved upon, which we signed, which we authorised him to present to the House of Commons, which he did so present in less than two hours after we had signed it, and the closing words of which I have taken as a motto to this letter, being the first of a series, which it is my intention to address to you, upon matters connected with the receipt and the disbursement of the public money, a liberty which I am sure you will excuse, when you consider that a just application of the heavy taxes that we pay, is absolutely necessary to the preservation of whatever we now have, whether of property or of liberty, and also to the preservation of the monarchy itself.

The Commission above-mentioned; that is to say, the Commission of MILITARY INQUIRY was, soon afterwards, formed and established by act of parliament, being the act 45 Geo. III. chap. 47. Mr. Pitt the then minister, nominated the members of this board, which has proceeded in its functions, and its First Report has been upon the table of the House of Commons nearly *two months*, it having been laid there on the 20th of March last, and having been ordered to be printed on the 21st of March. The whole of this Report, together with the Appendix, are comprised in 113 pages of loose print; and, this is a quantity of printing, which, at any one of the great printing offices in London, can be brought forth in the space of twenty-four hours.

The important facts brought to light by this Report it shall next be my endeavour to state to you; but, first of all, it will be proper that we retrace, and fix in our minds, what has happened as to changes in the offices of government; because, we shall find occasion, as we go along, to take these changes into view, in connection with the proceedings relative to the public money. Mr. Pitt died in January last, whereupon a change in the ministry took place; and, to our common satisfaction, this change introduced into the king's councils, Mr. Fox, Mr. WINDHAM, Mr. GREY (now Lord Howick) and LORD HENRY PETTY, all of whom had eminently distinguished themselves in those laudable efforts, of which we so highly approved and with so much gratitude acknowledged, in the case of Lord Viscount Melville. But, Gentlemen, in the expression of these, our approbation and gratitude, by what feeling were we animated? By that of personal hostility? By hatred of the *person* of Lord Viscount Melville? By an envious desire to come at his *places* and his *emoluments*? No: but by a love of public justice; justice upon the principles of the ancient and righteous laws of England, which respect not persons, but the vengeance of which falls with equal weight upon the high and upon the low, and which, in admitting, out of reverence to the person of the King, that *he* can do *no wrong*, fall, with undiminished weight, upon the person of those councillors, who may advise wrong, under the royal authority, to be done.

Acting, ourselves, from an impulse so disinterested and so perfectly consonant with the principles of impartial justice, we, in hailing the above-mentioned change in the councils of His Majesty, hailed the day

when those principles, vigorously acted upon, were about to work a reformation in every department, connected with the receipt and expenditure of 46 millions of money, now annually raised out of the fruits of our labour; and, amongst these departments, our eyes were naturally directed, as to a great and primary object, to the result of the inquiries to be made in the MILITARY Department, in which department there is now annually expended upwards of 18 millions of money. I will not say, Gentlemen, that we have looked *in vain*. I will not say, that our expectations in this respect, have actually *been disappointed*. But, I cannot refrain from saying, nor from endeavouring to draw your attention to the fact, that the First Report of the Commissioners of Military Inquiry has been before the House of Commons for nearly two months; and that, as yet, no proceeding whatever has thereon taken place, though, as I think, you will be fully convinced, this Report contains matter full as worthy of parliamentary proceedings as any of the matters contained in the Tenth Report of Naval Inquiry.

The subject of this First Report of the Military Commissioners is an inquiry relative to the money concerns of the BARRACK DEPARTMENT, of which LIEUTENANT-GENERAL DE LANCEY was at the head, under the title of "Barrack-Master General," from May 1794, until November 1804, when he resigned his office. A person of the name of GREENWOOD, an army agent, was, until the resignation of De Lancey (whose titles we will, for brevity's sake, now omit) Agent or Treasurer to the Barrack-Office.

It appears, from the Report and the accompanying documents, that the money for the public service, in the Barrack-Department, was, as it issued from the Treasury, not lodged in the Bank of England, but was held by GREENWOOD; and, it further appears, that this GREENWOOD, who received a salary of £530 a year, had in his hands an average sum of 32,500l. of the public money during the whole of the time that he was the Treasurer. The interest of 32,500l. for one year, at 5 per centum, is 1,625l. and, when we consider *the length of time*, we shall find, that, by this mode of lodging the public money, the *gains* to GREENWOOD, or some *other person*, must have been immense, and that the loss to the public must have been of correspondent amount.

But this is a mere trifle compared to what has come to light with regard to the public money appropriated and used by De Lancey himself, who, under the pretext of *securing himself against losses*, made, at different times, great charges under the head of *contingencies*, and thus drew out of the Treasury great sums, which still remain unaccounted for, and which are now *actually due to the public*. But, lest I should be accused of misrepresentation, I will here quote the Report itself, requesting you, gentlemen, to pay great attention to it.——

"In answer to the precept of the Board, "Lieut. Gen. De Lancey furnished us with "certain statements and accounts, from "which there results a balance due to the "public of 6,865l. 4s. being so much which "Lieut. Gen. De Lancey has drawn from "the Treasury beyond the amount which "he states to be due to him; but, on refe-"rence to the items of these accounts, it "appears to us that a much larger sum is "due to the public. Lieut. Gen. De Lancey "takes credit in every year for allowances "and emoluments under three heads:— "1. His pay as Barrack Master General, "and General Officer on the Staff. 2. His "travelling expences. 3. His contingen-"cies for additional charge and responsibi-"lity upon unsettled accounts, at one per "cent. on the expenditure of the barrack "department in each year.——The two "first heads have been made subjects of in-"quiry, and the observations which may "arise on them will be hereafter noticed; "the third is the transaction to which we "have before alluded; and it is of so im-"portant and singular a nature, that we "have been greatly influenced by the con-"siderations which arise on it, to make "this partial report. The Lieut. Gen. in-"forms us, that he takes credit for this "sum on account of contingent charges, "such as, "upon the making up and set-"" tling his accounts, he shall bring against "" the public;" and in an explanatory pa-"per on this subject, he adds, "that feel-"" ing most acutely the critical situation "" in which he has been placed, not only "" with respect to the losses to which he "" must be subjected from the mode to be "" applied to the settlement of his ac-"" counts, but likewise from the delay "" which has taken place, and which has "" deprived him of the means of recover-"" ing disallowances from the subordinate "" accountants; he therefore, in order "" to indemnify himself from losses "" which may arise upon the settlement "" of his accounts, found himself under "" the necessity of availing himself of the "" authority granted to him of making "" contingent charges, and stating a sum

" " in his contingent account for additional " " charge and responsibility to which in " " justice he ought not to have been sub- " " jected." Admitting that losses are " likely to accrue, and for the cause assigned, " it yet does not occur to us that Lieut. Gen. " De Lancey can indemnify himself against " such losses or disallowances, by appropri- " ating to himself so considerable a sum of " the public money; since this appropria- " tion must, in passing his accounts, be dis- " allowed equally with any other charges " for which no voucher nor authority is pro- " duced. It is observable that Lieut. Gen. " De Lancey introduced a similar charge " of one pound one shilling per centum on " the barrack expenditure into his early " accounts, submitted to examination in the " war-office in 1795; which charge, from " the year 1794, he justifies on the ground " that the " War-Office had charged him " " with large sums which he had never " " received;" and for the period previous " to 1794, on the ground, that he consi- " dered his " increased responsibility to " " take place from the commencement of " " his account." But the fact of the in- " troduction of this charge at a time when " no delay had occurred; its being after- " wards withdrawn from the accounts " which were passed at the War Office " (withdrawn, as he states, by himself, that " " no delay might have taken place in the " " settlement of his accounts by any " " questions arising);" and his total si- " lence on this subject in any communica- " tions made by him to the Select Commit- " tee of Finance in 1797, tend to invali- " date the reasons adduced in its justifica- " tion; and Lieut. Gen. De Lancey not " shewing *any authority* for this charge, " amounting to 88,923l. we are of opinion " that this sum should be added to his ac- " knowledged balance of 6,865l. 4s. before- " mentioned, *and the total amount repaid* " *without delay to the account of the present* " *Barrack Master General at the Bank of* " *England.*—It further appears to us, that " there is an error in Lieut. Gen. De Lan- " cey's personal account, the correction of " which will add to this balance. Lieut. " Gen. De Lancey takes credit for 1,570l. 1s. " the amount of a warrant granted him by " the War Office for his pay and allowances " for the year 1793; these charges are al- " ready included in the two first items of his " account, and amount to 1626l. 16s. which " credit must therefore be cancelled, and " added to the balance, making the total " sum due by Lieut. Gen. De Lancey to the " public 97,415l.!" Mark the amount, gentlemen! And, let us, presently, hear the sentiments of the ministers with regard to the absolute, the hard, the cruel *necessity*, of the new taxes which they are now imposing upon the people.——After the above statement the Commissioners proceed thus: " The appropriation of so large a " sum to an unauthorised use, and especi- " ally of so great a proportion of it in the " last ten months of Lt. G. De Lancey's " holding the office of Barrack Master Ge- " neral, afforded strong grounds to presume, " that the statements given in by the Bar- " rack-Office, on which the Lords of the " Treasury proceeded in the issues of money " for barrack services, were *not the correct* " *documents* we should have expected them " to be; and, our inquiries have *justified* " *that presumption.* The current services " were provided for by monthly statements, " and the extra, or unforeseen services by " subsequent requisitions or estimates; but " the existing balances in the hands of the " Treasurer were no where noticed, nor was " any allowance or deduction made for " sums received for rent of canteens, and " sale of dung, and re payments to a con- " siderable amount. It is obvious, there- " fore, *how funds have been found* to answer " the drafts of Lieut. Gen. De Lancey *on* " *his personal account*; and by reference to " Mr. Greenwood's examination, it will be " seen in what manner a part of the sums " drawn by him in the years 1803 and " 1804, has been appropriated." This is, indeed, obvious enough; for, from the examination here referred to, it appears, that, during the years 1803 and 1804, of the sums drawn out of the Treasury, and received by GREENWOOD on account of the *public service*, four sums, amounting to 11,096l. were immediately carried to DE LANCEY'S *private* account, instead of being applied to meet demands upon the barrack-department! And, observe, gentlemen, that, while this was going on, De Lancey was receiving pay from the public. that is to say from the people, that is to say, in part, out of our labour; from this source he was receiving pay, 1st, as Colonel of the 17th regiment of dragoons; 2d, as Barrack Master General; 3d, as *a Lieut. Gen. upon the Staff*; and 4th, for travelling expenses as Barrack Master General, at the average of about 1000l. a year! So that, in the whole, he was receiving, in *pay* and *travelling expenses*, about 5,000l. a year, and in mere pay alone about 4,000l. a year. But, before I proceed to draw the comparison between this case and that of Lord Viscount Melville and Mr. Trotter, I must stop for a mo-

ment to beseech your attention to the nature of the several offices, for the filling of which this person was receiving pay out of the pocket of the people. As colonel of the 17th regiment of dragoons, it was, unquestionably incumbent upon him, to superintend the affairs of that regiment; for, to what end is a colonel appointed to a regiment; to what end is he paid a thousand or two a year for filling that office; to what end is there any such rank, unless there be some duty attached to it? We shall be told, perhaps, that this is, from usage, become a post of mere emolument; that it is now a mere sinecure; that a man, by holding such a post, does not regard himself as bound to do duty with the regiment, but that he does not regard himself as bound ever to *see* it; that many offices about the court and at Whitehall, requiring constant attendance there, are filled by men, who are, at the same time, colonels of regiments, and who, of course, can scarcely ever see such regiments. As an illustration of this, we may be reminded, that GENERAL FITZPATRICK, who is now *Secretary at War*, and who has more than a hundred clerks under him, has during the few weeks that he has been in that office, become also *a colonel of a regiment*, a post given him, of course, by the *advice of the Duke of York*; and, it will, perhaps, be added, that the General has withdrawn his notice (which was given during last session of parliament) for a motion relative to the advice given to the king to dismiss officers, as in the case of Colonel Cochrane Johnstone, whose *Letter to the Duke of York* the public are in possession of. But, Gentlemen, these colonelships, though it would appear, that they are concerns of mere profit, are not sinecures for life, it being in the power of the king to take them away at any moment that he pleases; so that, there being now about 200 regiments, there are, of course, 200 men, many of whom are members of parliament, from whom his Majesty can, at any moment he pleases, take an office worth about 1,500l. a year; and, observe, that, in the case of the army, there is *no responsibility in the adviser*, the dismission of officers of the army being an absolute prerogative of the crown.——The office of Barrack-Master General you have already some idea of, from the circumstance of the officer's being required to travel so much as to cost the public about a thousand a year in travelling expenses; but, you will have a still better idea of its importance, when I tell you, that, in this department, and under this officer, there is expended annually about 1,500,000l. of the public money.——Yet, to this office was added in the person of DE LANCEY, that of a Lieutenant-General *upon the staff*. THE STAFF, gentlemen, is not in this application of the word, a very intelligible name. It means an establishment of Generals and other officers, whose business it is to command, not particular corps, but *the army*, or parts of the army. These generals and other officers do, indeed, bear rank and receive pay, in their particular corps; but, they are selected from those corps, and taken away, for the time being, for the purpose of directing the operations of the whole of the corps considered as an army, and acting as such; they are relieved from the performance of their regimental duties, in order that they may be able to devote the whole of their time, attention, and talents, to the more important services of the army in general, upon which talents and industry so employed, the safety of a nation may frequently depend. Accordingly, at the head of OUR STAFF is the Duke of York, and, upon the same establishment, are, I believe, *five* of his royal brothers, unless the Duke of Cambridge be still upon THE STAFF of Hanover. The Duke of Gloucester is also a general upon the Staff; and, upon the same establishment was Lieut. Gen. De Lancey, though, as we have seen, he was, at the same time, Barrack-Master General, having the care of the expenditure of 1,500,000l. a year, and expending while travelling about the country upon the Barrack business, about a thousand a year of the public money. The *reasons* for the Duke of York's putting De Lancey upon this establishment were, we must suppose, as cogent as those which produced De Lancey's selection of GREENWOOD for a Treasurer. The *fact* of De Lancey's being a Lieut. Gen. upon the staff, and of his receiving *pay* for filling that office is all that, for the present, we have to do with. I will just add, that the charge upon the public, on account of staff officers and officers of garrisons, was, in the last year only, 289,027l. and yet that "unprin-"cipled *plunderer*" of *foreign* nations, Buonaparté, has the impudence, the intolerable impudence and insolence, to tell us that we have "no generals," and to laugh at our staff establishment! Were he to come *here*, Gentlemen, were he to dare to come, he would soon be made to laugh on the other side of his mouth!

Begging your pardon for this long digression, I now return to the First Report of the Commission of Military Inquiry; and the best way to view the matter, it appears to me, is to take it comparatively with the facts con-

tained in, and the parliamentary proceedings upon, the Tenth Report of Naval Inquiry.

From this last-mentioned Report, Gentlemen, it appeared, that large sums of the public money had, during the space of 16 years, been drawn out of the Treasury for alledged naval purposes, and had been applied, for a considerable time, at least, to *other* than naval purposes; for instance, to the discounting of bills, to the liquidating of private accounts, and, as in the case of the loan to Boyd and Benfield, to the accommodating of merchants (those merchants being members of the House of Commons) with the means, *interest free*, of paying their instalments *upon loans made by them to the public*, and upon which loans they were *receiving interest from the public!* This last, however, was, it would seem, an act of merit, rather than a crime, seeing that Mr. Fox and the other persons who have been chiefly instrumental in bringing Lord Melville to trial, have, very recently, voted for a grant of 40,000l. of the public money to pay the debts of Mr. Pitt, and that, too, upon the express ground of Mr. Pitt's *public merit*; and, we all know, that the naval money lent to Boyd and Benfield without interest, was lent with the knowledge of, and was, in fact, actually lent by Mr. Pitt's consent, and with the approbation and participation of Mr. Pitt. As to the two other characteristics, namely, the discounting of bills, and the liquidating of private accounts, with the public money, the Naval and Military Reports bear a pretty exact resemblance; for, though, as to the first, there does not appear any direct evidence to prove, that the public money which was drawn out of the Treasury on account of the Barrack-Office, and which lay at GREENWOOD's, or *elsewhere*, was employed in the discounting of bills, it would be very unreasonable to suppose, that it was not employed in some way or other for purposes of private emolument; and, as to the second, there is direct and positive evidence, that, in the years 1803 and 1804 only, the sum of 11,096l. which had been drawn out of the Treasury on account, and in the name of Barrack Services, *was transferred to* DE LANCEY's *private account* with his agent GREENWOOD. Thus far, Gentlemen, the two Reports proceed pretty nearly, if not quite, upon a parallel; but, there is one striking and most important dissimilarity in *favour* of the persons inculpated in the Naval Report; and, Gentlemen, I must bespeak your patience, while I endeavour to give you a fair description of it. You must remember, that it was frequently urged, by the defenders of Lord Viscount Melville, that his account with the public was settled; that it was cleared off; that he had actually paid the balance due upon his account; that, in short, the books clearly shewed, that *he owed the public nothing*, and that, therefore, nothing has the public *suffered* by him. This, said *we* (as we still say) is sophistical; it is a misrepresentation; it is a deception; for, though, at the *end* of his holding the office of Treasurer of the Navy, he made his accounts square; though he *then* brought and paid into that Treasury all the sums of public money that were in his hands; yet, that, during the long continuance of his treasurership, he had constantly large sums in his hands, or permitted such sums to remain in the hands of others, instead of leaving them in the Bank of England or in the King's Exchequer till wanted for naval services, and that he did thereby cause an injury to the public equal to the amount of the interest of such sums, to say nothing about the means, which, by the use of such sums were afforded, of procuring influence as to matters connected with politics. But, Gentlemen, while you will not fail to perceive, that this reasoning applies with equal force to the case of DE LANCEY and those *who are concerned with him*, I beseech you to remark, that DE LANCEY has *not settled his account*; that he has *not paid in his balance due to the public*; that, leaving his gains by *interest* out of the question, he *now* OWES, upon the face of his own accounts, 97,415l. to the public; that he has *in his hands* this immense sum of money, which, as you well know, has been raised, in taxes, out of the fruit of our labour; and, accordingly, as you have seen, in the part of the Report which I have extracted for your information, the Commissioners of Military Inquiry state, that he ought to be made to pay, without delay, the said sum back into the Treasury of the nation.

Thus, Gentlemen, having, with what degree of clearness I am able, placed the case before you, I might leave you to apply what has been called to your recollection at the beginning of this letter; but, it seems necessary to make an observation or two tending a little further to illustrate what was there pointed out. You remember how, in the case of Lord Melville, the MORNING CHRONICLE (then the *opposition* newspaper) vociferated for *justice*; speedy justice; no delay! And you must remember, that, even *before* the Report was printed, what broad hints it threw out upon the subject. Yet, *now*, it is as blind as a mole, or, at

any rate, as mute as a fish! Why this difference, Gentlemen? Why this foul, nay, I must call it, this base partiality? What is it to you and me, Gentlemen, whether a man be in place or out of place, so that he has our money in his pocket? What is it to us, who wants his place, or by whom he is protected? What is it to us, *whom* he has lent our money to, so that we have been deprived of the use of it? Bear in mind, too, that, in the case of DE LANCEY, there is a certain specified sum; the fixed sum of 97,415l. now due to the public, and recommended by the Commissioners to be immediately ordered to be paid into the Treasury; and that, as yet, not one word has, any where, been said about *acting* upon this recommendation; or, that, if a word has any where been said about it, it has been said so very softly as for it not to have reached your and my ears. In the case of Lord Viscount Melville and Mr. Trotter, you remember, Gentlemen, that it was strongly urged by our Representative, Mr. FOX (who is now *a minister*), by Mr. GREY (who is now also *a minister*), by Mr. WINDHAM (who is now also *a minister*), and by LORD HENRY PETTY (who is now also *a minister*), that, one way, in which the public had been injured by Lord Viscount Melville and Mr. Trotter, was, the *risk* which the public ran in consequence of its money having been held in *private hands*, instead of being safely lodged in the Treasury or in the Bank of England. Let us apply this reasoning (very sound reasoning) to the case of DE LANCEY; and, where shall we find the *cause* of 97,415l. being now quietly left in his hands, or in the hands of *others* of his choosing, without any security at all; or, at least, without any security that you and I have ever heard of?

It now remains for me to remind you of the public pecuniary circumstances, of the state of our national money-affairs, at the moment that this great sum is left in the hands of DE LANCEY, or of *others*, to whose keeping he may have confided it. And here, Gentlemen, I shall trouble you with nothing of my own; I shall not (even suppose it necessary) remind you of the endless and pressing calls of the taxgatherers of numerous descriptions, nor shall I exhort you to look at the 1,200,000 paupers, who now inhabit this fertile island, cultivated by all the means that the greatest degree of ingenuity and of industry combined are capable of producing: I shall content myself with just noticing two instances of taxation brought forward during the present session of parliament, namely, the addition to the INCOME TAX, and the new tax upon PIG-IRON; and, as to the former, I shall merely insert here a debate upon the subject, as I find it in the Morning Chronicle newspaper of Thursday last, the 8th instant, the debate having taken place on the preceding day.——"Mr. W. "SMITH stated his objections to the bill, "which were, that it operated most unjustly and unequally, inasmuch as it taxed, at "the same rate, incomes which arose from "different species of property totally distinct in their nature and value. It was a "gross insult upon sense, to tax at the same "rate income from capital, and income "depending solely on personal exertion; "income from property not worth 3 years "purchase, and income from property "worth 30 years purchase. The title was "false and delusive, for the tax was not "upon property, but upon income, and it "was to all intents and purposes an income "tax. He also objected to it on account of "the principle of disclosure which it involved, and which afforded such inquisitorial and vexatious powers to the officers "of govt. as rendered it to the last degree "grating to the feelings of Englishmen. "This principle of disclosure had, however, "been much modified by a noble lord (Sidmouth), now in the other house, and for "this he deserved the thanks of the country. But still the principle remained and "vitiated the whole bill. He had no great "objection to the rise from $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to "10 per cent. He was aware of the *difficulties with which his friends had to struggle*. They were placed in a situation "which *compelled them to adopt measures "which they themselves might not consider "as the best*. The *money must be raised*, "and the difficulties attending the execution of a real tax on property, or of raising the necessary supplies in any other "way were so great that he was not surprised that they had not been able, in "the first instance, to get over them. But "he thought the tax a grievance of an intolerable kind, and he would not have done "his duty had he not stated his objections "to it.——Sir ROBERT BUXTON opposed "the bill on the grounds of its involving an "unequal principle of taxation. He hoped "that some relief would be given to the "landed interest, especially to country gentlemen with incomes of about 2,000l. a "year.——Sir HENRY MILDMAY also opposed it, on the ground of its imposing a "duty of 4s. in the pound on the landed interest instead of 2s. It bore peculiarly "hard on one description of people! men "of small landed property who had large fa-

" milies, and he hoped that some abate-
" ments would be allowed on their account.
" ——Mr. Perceval supported the bill,
" on the ground that it was impossible that
" an equal sum of money could be raised so
" equally, upon the whole, on property of
" every description. *The money must be*
" *raised*, and this was, in fact, the best plan
" that could be devised. It was a tax on
" profits, and so the title implied. He
" hoped, however, that exemptions would
" be allowed in many cases, otherwise the
" measure might become *so odious*, that we
" might be in danger of losing it altogether.
" ——Mr. Wilberforce agreed with his
" hon. friend who spoke last, and hoped that
" exemptions would be allowed in all cases
" where the necessaries of life were con-
" cerned. It would be hard if, when one
" part of a ship's crew were enjoying every
" sort of luxury, the other should be put
" upon short allowance. He stated the
" cases of the officers of the army and navy
" under a certain income; but what had
" been done for the latter, and was to be
" done for the former, might preclude the
" necessity of any exemption for them.
" But the case of clergymen under a certain
" income must be considered. He knew
" *large supplies must be raised*, and if the
" tax should fail in any degree on account
" of abatements to persons of a small in-
" come, he would be willing that it should
" be made up by an additional rate on the
" higher classes.——Lord Henry Petty
" said, that the opposition which had been
" that night expressed to the bill, it was not
" necessary then to answer. He *did not*
" *mean to say that the measure was the most*
" *equal, or the most perfect*, that it was
" possible for human ingenuity to devise;
" and perhaps a tax on capital, or a variation
" of the tax, as applied to the different spe-
" cies of property, would be preferable;
" but, *under the present circumstances of the*
" *country*, it would be wrong to relinquish
" a tried system, for the sake of embarking
" into a new and complicated arrangement.
" The principle of exemption, he was con-
" vinced, was one by which the individual
" gained least, and the public lost most;
" and, in proportion as the operation of an
" act was simplified by great and general
" rules, its produce was secured. It would
" become his duty, *however painful*, to op-
" pose all exemptions proposed; and when
" gentlemen were told that by acceding, as
" he had, to the representation lately made,
" as far as regarded small annuitants, the
" loss of the country would be 350,000*l.* he
" trusted they would no longer press exemp-
" tions, which struck at the root of the tax."
——Thus, then, *necessity*, hard *necessity*; an absolute *necessity*; a want of money; a want of money, and nothing else, is urged in support of this tax, which, Gentlemen, I need not characterize, my only object being to remind you, that, it is in this state of our affairs, that one individual holds in his hands 97,415*l.* of our money, which he owes the public, and which the Commissioners expressly declare that he ought to be made to pay immediately into the Treasury!—— The same all-powerful argument, Gentlemen, is urged in support of the tax upon Pig-Iron. This tax was attempted to be laid by Mr. Pitt, but was by him abandoned. This iron, the produce of our own mines and the raw material of a most extensive branch of our manufactures, is worth, upon an average, 5 pounds a ton; and the proposed tax is 2 pounds a ton! It will create about 120 *new excisemen* to watch the furnaces, besides those that will be necessary to watch over the packing of iron and steel goods for exportation, in order to ascertain the amount of the draw-back. The persons employed in the trades and callings connected with this proposition, alledge, that these trades will be ruined; and, every man must be satisfied, that they will be *greatly injured* by the vexations of an excise system thus extended to a staple produce of the earth. The persons employed in this branch of our manufactures are computed to be 500,000 in number; and, the manufacture itself is, in point of national importance, *second* to none but that of *Wool*. Yet, while our ministers are imposing a tax like this, which, even upon their own estimates, will produce only 419,000*l.* a year clear money, and which will put 20,000*l.* a year into the pockets of excisemen, who, by the same operation, will be withdrawn from the labours of the workshop or the field; while this is the case, the sum of 97,415*l.* of the public money is lying in the hands of Delancy, or of *others*, to whom he has committed it.

Here I stop, Gentlemen, for the present. I have done little more than lay before you a statement of such facts as you may not have been acquainted with. The opinions to be therefrom drawn I leave to yourselves.

I am, &c. &c. Wm. Cobbett.

May 6th, 1806.

SUMMARY OF POLITICS.

Under this head I must be very brief.—— Upon India Affairs there was an important debate, in the House of Commons, on Thursday, the 8th instant. Mr. Banks's, having suggested the propriety of sending

Lord Wellesley's affair to the Court of King's Bench, the suggestion was decidedly disapproved of by several members, particularly by Dr. Laurence, Mr. Francis, and the Marquis of Douglas, which nobleman afterwards moved for the production of several papers relative to the conduct of Lord Wellesley, amongst which was the famous *instructions for regulating the PRESS in India!* The debate was of great importance indeed; the House appeared decidedly for the mode of *impeachment*. A full account of the debate shall be given in my next. In the meanwhile I beg leave to refer the reader to a letter upon India Affairs, in a subsequent page of this sheet; but, I cannot help saying that I differ from the writer as to what he has said respecting MR. FRANCIS; and, though I have inserted his letter, I think it proper to apprize him, that any future communication, marked by insinuations such as are contained in the first part of his present letter, will certainly be rejected. I would further apprize him, that, when facts or arguments are valuable, they stand in need of no *name* to induce me to insert them; and that my fixed opinion, is, that, in assuming the language of a *monitor*, a correspondent should take care to discover information, or talents, more than ordinary.—— Every argument that I have heard in favour of the SLAVE-TRADE BILL is, in my opinio completely answered in a letter which immediately follows below. It is to be hoped, that those who have this bill in their hands will *pause* and *reflect*.

*** My correspondents may be assured, that I pay attention to all their communications, and that, as fast as room and suitable occasions present themselves, I will not fail to use the best of my exertions to prevent their labour from being lost. It is not my custom to make notifications of this sort; but, the many valuable letters which are at present in my possession render this notification necessary.

☞ In the preceding sheet, amongst many other ERRORS OF THE PRESS, the following are pointed out as causing the expression of a meaning precisely the contrary of that which was intended to be conveyed. In page 648, line 19 from the bottom, the "*too*" should have been left out. In page 650, line 10 from the top, the "*not*" should be left out; for, God forbid that I should say, that ministers of the Church can be *too* much encouraged to reside in their parishes; or, that pluralities are *not* the cause of non-residence!

Dilworths

SLAVE TRADE BILL.

SIR;——It appears to be highly necessary to place in a just point of view, a measure now depending in parliament, for abolishing forever the foreign slave trade. The zealots for a total abolition, will derive great gratification at finding that the plan in question has succeeded; they will consider that they are in the high road towards the attainment of their ultimate object, they will observe, that the ground on which their opponents formerly stood, has been much undermined, and their expectations will lead them to think that the same legislature, which has sanctioned a partial abolition, may be prevailed on without much difficulty to advance one step further, and by so doing to complete the work so auspiciously commenced according to their notions. If an encroachment be once suffered, it will be an arduous undertaking to prevent a repetition of it; and, when the business of abolition shall again become a subject of discussion, which will happen at no very distant day, the legislature will be gravely told, true it is you have done a great deal towards the accomplishment of a total abolition, but there is a little still left undone, and that little unperformed deprives you of the merit of proclaiming that you have purified yourselves, from what the abolitionists call, the contamination of the Slave Trade.——It should be remembered, that it is an old artifice often employed to endeavour to weaken the force of united opponents, by sowing dissention among them; and by pointing out, to different individuals of the common body, that their private interests will be promoted by seceding from the union. To separate and divide the general body connected with the British West India Islands, is the ardent pursuit at present of the abolitionists, and disunion once established, they are confident that the scattered and divided ranks can afford no substantial resistance to their future attacks. It is anxiously desired by them to create a diversity of opinions among the West India interest, and they rely that, standing on the vantage ground gained by prevailing on the legislature to adopt the bill now under consideration, they will have no reason to dread hereafter the exertions of an enfeebled opposition, when it shall be thought discreet and adviseable for them by and by to apply to parliament for a total abolition.—It can be shewn that the bill now depending, will ultimately produce a total abolition. The African merchants have uniformly advanced, and offered to prove, that if the slave trade should be confined solely to the supply of

our own colonies, such a restricted and narrowed commerce would not be worth pursuing. They have urged that this trade requires the united encouragement, derived both from the foreign market, and from the supply of the British colonies; and that, if a great proportion of the encouragement hitherto open to them, should be taken away, they will withdraw their capitals intirely from this business. But, supposing even that British merchants should be induced not to retire immediately from the trade, after the foreign markets shall have been closed against them, it is plain that a few experiments would soon drive them from it. If Jamaica should be chosen as the scene of their commercial adventures, they would shortly find, that their dealings would be altogether regulated and controuled by the will and pleasure of the purchasers, who knowing that no foreign competition could be raised against them, and that their markets afforded the only place of sale, would be enabled to prescribe their own terms to the sellers. If the British colonies should, however, be hereafter supplied with African labourers, they must in such event be contented to pay a very advanced price for them; for the African merchants convinced that no speculation could be carried on without placing them too much in the power of the purchasers; would require that their profits should be ascertained to them * * * * by contracts executed in Great Britain. The effect of this will be to render the supply at best very precarious, to advance the price considerably to all, and to render it impracticable for the majority of settlers to obtain any labourers, on account of the very exorbitant prices demanded for them.—— Some of the supporters of this bill assert, that their plan will confer a benefit on the old sugar colonies, by repressing the cultivation of foreign colonies, who are their rivals: because, they alledge that whilst Britain continues to carry on the foreign slave trade, the improvement of those colonies is promoted by their being abundantly supplied with slaves by British traders, and that such supply will cease when it shall be unlawful for British subjects to be concerned in the foreign slave trade. It is also proclaimed in loud language, which declares open hostility against all sound argument, that it is necessary to interpose this measure, with a view to check the growth of the maritime strength of our rivals, which is increased by augmenting the prosperity of their colonies. Let a little calm reflection be employed, and then let us mark the result. Experience has manifested the extreme anxiety of foreigners to enjoy a considerable share of the African trade; they are most vigilantly seeking to obtain it; and, if a British act of parliament should oblige British vessels to withdraw from the foreign slave trade, foreign bottoms will supply their places, and foreign colonies will still be amply supplied with slaves, by foreigners trading even with British capital, notwithstanding all the precautions which can be devised by Parliament. Our regulations will not then have the effect of stopping the improvement of those colonies; and it is therefore evident, the measure cannot be supported on the ground of policy. It is also to be remembered that, as our abandonment of the trade will throw it into the hands of foreigners, their shipping will thereby be increased, and their marine consequently benefited. The bill cannot be defended on the ground of humanity, as foreigners who will be employed in conducting the trade, will not be bound to adhere to the wholesome regulations provided by parliament, which take care that the number of slaves carried in a British bottom, shall be duly proportioned to the tonnage of such vessel.——It may be useful to take another view of this most important subject. During the present reign many measures have been adopted for carrying on a commercial intercourse between the British West Indies, and the Spanish colonies, by establishing free ports; but, if the bill should be passed into a law, this beneficial trade will be lost by prohibiting one of its principal articles, and by the operation of certain vexatious regulations, which shall be afterwards adverted to. This intercourse enables Great Britain to find a vent for considerable quantities of British manufactures, which the Spaniards are desirous of buying at the free ports, provided they can at the same time purchase a proportion of slaves; and it is well known, that vessels whose cargoes consist principally of British goods, are permitted to enter at Spanish ports, only when it is ascertained that they have also on board Negroes for importation. They constitute the sanction, under which our goods find their way from the free ports to many parts of the Spanish territories in America. In return, indigo, cotton wool, dye woods of various descriptions, hides, tallow, and bullion are obtained. This intercourse furnishes the British colonies with their chief supply of specie, which is afterwards either remitted in considerable quantities to this country, or is expended in contributing to enable the planters to pay for provisions and lumber from America. Without the free

port system, some of those islands would be destitute of specie.—It may be proper here to observe, that independent of the free port trade, Great Britain enjoys great commercial advantages from a trade carried on through other channels, which would altogether cease, by precluding her subjects from being concerned in the foreign slave trade. If the government of this country are prepared to give up a commerce, which affords considerable employment to great numbers of her artizans and manufacturers, and which pours riches into her lap, without providing a substitute for the loss; and, especially at a time, when unusual clouds hang over the commercial horizon from recent events, and when the empire is bleeding at every pore from the pressure of immense taxation. It is the evident object of the bill, through all its various provisions to subject the African trader to multiplied penalties and dangers, if he shall be hardy enough to pursue the trade for the sake of supplying our own colonies, and to fetter it by such formidable impediments, as will deter almost every one from embarking in it.—The spirit of the bill, though attempted to be disguised, is at war with the whole of the trade, and seeks to do that covertly, which the abolitionists have failed to accomplish openly. In substance the effect is the same, whether the trade is totally and at once abolished, or whether the remaining branch of it is so weighed down by such oppressve regulations as warn a prudent man to retire from it.—There are other objections of a very serious nature, which may be offered against other parts of the bill. It contains a clause, which provides that no slaves shall be removed from one British colony or island to another, until a licence shall be obtained by the owner of them permitting him to remove them, and specifying the place of their destination; that previous to their removal such owner shall give a bond in a penal sum, equal to the sum of fifty pounds sterling, for every slave so to be carried, and that the condition of the said bond shall be, that the proprietor shall faithfully and truly land or deliver such slaves at the place to which he shall be authorised to convey the same.—It may with great propriety be contended by the colonial legislatures, that this provision contains matter of internal regulation, which is sought to be carried into effect by an act of the British parliament, that it tends to subvert the constitutional rights of the colonies, *who have always claimed the exclusive power of legislating for themselves in all questions which involve considerations of domestic economy*. It has been understood by the colonists that their legislatures alone are entitled to impose rules for the government of property situated in those countries, but the bill attempts to restrict the use of such property, by proposing to enact that the proprietors of slaves in the West India colonies shall not be allowed to dispose of their Negroes, with the same degree of ownership as they have hitherto enjoyed; and it even does more, as it endeavours to impose pains and penalties, which are to be enforced there in case the intended law shall be transgressed. To declare to the inhabitants of our West India possessions that parliament has established particular conditions, which must be complied with by them before they can exercise the right of removing a part of their property, even from one British settlement to another, is surely an infringement of the colonial constitutions. All this is done without the consent of the legislatures of the colonies, who in all other concerns of internal management, are acknowledged to possess supreme power. The right of emigration is materially effected by the measure in question, and in proportion as the use of property is restricted, its value is certainly diminished. It is worthy of consideration, whether it be prudent or wise at any time, and more especially at this juncture, without any real cause or adequate motive, to originate discussions, which my embrace points of the most serious controversy. It is provided by another clause of the bill, that if any slave shall be employed on a voyage from a British colony or island, to a foreign settlement, their names and descriptions should be inserted in or endorsed upon the clearance or permit to depart of such vessel, and if any slave shall be found on board, whose name shall not be inserted in or endorsed upon the clearance or permit, or, who shall be untruly or fraudulently described therein, with intent to violate any of the prohibitions, or regulations of the act, every such slave may be seized and confiscated. The bill also gives a right of seizure to his Majesty's vessels of war.—Those who are conversant with the nature of the foreign trade carried on in the West Indies, are aware that British vessels when thus employed, are in general navigated by slaves. And it is apparent, that this provision of the bill will afford ample scope for making numerous seizures, and thereby frequently defeating the purposes of the merchants who are engaged in that branch of commerce. Such a restriction bill ultimately annihilates all intercourse between the British West India islands, and

foreign settlements; and it is also highly objectionable, as containing matter of internal regulation.—W. W.—*7th May*, 1806.

INDIA AFFAIRS.

SIR,——I have read with attention and satisfaction, your several publications which contain your opinions and observations on the Affairs of India; and am truly concerned to find, by your last Register, that you are about to take your leave of the subject, until certain documents shall be laid before parliament, in support of a charge recently preferred against the Marquis Wellesley.—That *you* will return to the charge, I confidently hope; that Mr. Paull will pursue his present inquiry, as soon as he is enabled to proceed, I wish and expect; but, I have been so much disappointed in my hopes, wishes, and expectations, that I shall scarcely be surprised, if Mr. Paull should follow the example of Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, and others; or, if you and your Register shall change your politics, like Mr. Spankey and his Chronicle.—It is true that the Affairs of India have at length forced themselves into notice, and have agitated the public mind; they have occupied the attention of parliament; awakened the dormant faculties of the East India Directors, and roused the latent energies of many of the proprietors; but whether these effects are to be ascribed to the real importance of the subject, to a conviction of the injustice of the system recently pursued in India; to a sympathy with the sufferings of deposed princes and imprisoned chieftains; to a feeling for the ravages of war and the desolation of provinces; or, to the situation of the company, described by Mr. Thornton in parliament; or, whether a demand of money from this burthened country, to prop the tottering empire in India, has caused the present sensation, concerning our Eastern governments, is, as you say, immaterial.—If the public and its representatives in parliament, will but investigate soberly and impartially, the transactions which have happened in India, during the administration of Lord Wellesley, I care not whether the inquiry be occasioned by Mr. Paull's assertions of his lordships guilt, or by Lord Temple's bold declarations of the justice and policy of the measures in question.—As it is yet likely, that Lord Wellesley's conduct will be submitted to the grand national inquest, I will not anticipate, from an examination of the papers before parliament, the probability of his inculpation. But, after what has been said by his friends and relations in both houses of the legislature, in justification of his measures in India; after they have invited, and even challenged an examination of his administration; I hope, for the sake of decency, that no means will be used, similar to those we have lately witnessed, to smother inquiry, or defeat investigation.—I mean not to compliment you, Mr. Cobbett, in stating, that next to Mr. Paull, the public is indebted to yourself, for the pains you have lately bestowed on Indian subjects. And, I am persuaded, that if you will continue your observations, and direct your thoughts to objects connected with the administration of our Eastern Empire, not immediately in discussion, your future communications, will instruct and gratify your readers; and, I trust, that the present suspension of Indian inquiry in parliament, will not abstract your attention from a subject of so much interest and importance.—You will be pleased to recollect, that there has hitherto prevailed, in the minds of persons in and out of parliament, a repugnance against every subject connected with India, its finances, or its politics. In the House of Commons, it has been declared, that India and every question relating to it, were irksome to parliament; the attention of which has diminished in proportion as our empire has increased; and Lord Castlereagh or Mr. Francis, could never obtain an audience of more than twenty members, when the Indian Budgets were discussed! With respect to the public, the transactions of our Eastern governments, could not become the subjects of popular observation, except as related to wars, battles, victories, and repulses; the building of palaces, or endowing of colleges; and for this plain reason, Mr. Cobbett, that until the Indian correspondence and papers were laid before Parliament, the public in India as well as in England, was ignorant of every information. but of the naked events which happened. The want of intelligence abroad is imputable to the state of the press in India, which you have correctly described, and to the despotism of the government, which threatened with immediate banishment from the country, any person who dared to discuss the measures or politics of Lord Wellesley; and, it is an undoubted fact, that of the number who subscribed the fulsome addresses to his lordship on the conclusion of peace with the Mahratta chieftains, there were not ten persons who had ever heard of the causes of the war!——You will not, I hope, be offended, at any seeming mistrust, which this letter may betray of Mr. Paull or of yourself. If Mr. Paull shall *cooly* and *advisedly* persevere in his system of inquiry; and if you shall continue staunch in the opinions which you have promulgated; the

tcountry will have occasion to rejoice that there is one man in parliament, who is free from the trammells of party, and who dares o be independant *there*; and that there is an individual in England, possessed of talents to be feared, whose integrity can maintain the freedom of the press, and prove that every man has *not* his price; and this too, at a season when dirilection has become the order of the day.——I should have abstained from these observations, but I have been lately so disappointed and disgusted, by the conduct of public characters, that I now consider principle and power as convertible terms. I have remarked, that the most eminent, and (who have hitherto been considered) the most *honest* men of the day, have suddenly abandoned every rule of their former political character; have deserted principles, which for years they avowed and boldly supported; or have frittered away and qualified their previous opinions, until they cannot be recognized. I have heard our leading senators, in the teeth of consistency, maintain doctrines, which some months ago they would have resented with indignation; and I have observed the chiefs of the late opposition, members of the present administration, as ready to adopt the principles, as as they were eager to fill the places of their predecessors.—In support of what I have advanced, I shall not in this letter, advert to many instances, with which the public is familiar, and which you have ably and clearly pointed out; but, I cannot refrain from noticing the relinquishment of opinion, and inconsistency of conduct, manifested by several members of parliament, more especially in respect to the affairs of India.—First, I shall call your attention to Mr. Francis, who, in my humble opinion, most certainly deserves the high eulogium, bestowed on him by Mr. Fox, when he said in parliament "that there is no one character in his Ma- "jesty's dominions, whose merit, with re- "gard to the affairs of India could be put in "competition with that of Mr. Francis."—But, when I acknowledge the vast local information, parliamentary knowledge, and transcendant abilities, which this gentleman possesses, the more am I entitled to inquire, why he has abandoned the affairs of India? "After passing six years in Bengal, then a "wretched passage of 12 months to Eng- "land, and from that time a continued la- "bour of two and twenty years, unsupport- "ed and alone, without thanks or reward, "in the maintenance of right against "wrong," why has he now resolved to suffer wrong to overcome right? "After "endeavouring 30 years to support the law- "ful authority of the East India Company "over their nominal servants, and labour- "ing to preserve the peace of India, and to "shelter its native princes from injustice, "conquest, and oppression," why has Mr. Francis now refused to take any part in the prosecution or censure of any Indian delinquency whatever? After a continuation of meritorious exertions, in and out of parliament, to confine the government of the East within the bounds prescribed by legislative wisdom, and sound policy, and to teach the East India Company and the nation, the real and true advantages to be derived from Indian commerce; will Mr. Francis, close the career of his active and useful life in sullen indifference, or discontented exclamations? Has he abandoned his former situation of *standing counsel* for the company and for the nation, on the subject of India, because he has laboured too long "without fee or "reward?" Was it then for the sake of lucre, or of preferment, that he undertook that unthankful and invidious office? Have all his exertions in favour of suffering India, and its injured princes, proceeded from a hope of reward? And is it, that because he has not been remunerated with place or pension, that "his *spirits* are exhausted," and "his "mind is subdued?" Did he expect any *gratification* for the part which he took in the impeachment of Mr. Hastings, the failure of which he laments, beyond the satisfaction arising from a conscientious discharge of a public duty? As he did not succeed in that impeachment, is it an honest or a parliamentary reason, for his abstaining from the prosecution or censure of all subsequent delinquency? As well may he say, that because any man accused at the Old Bailey has been acquitted, the functions of the judge and jury shall not be exercised on other criminals?—Mr. Francis, I grant, "is his own "master, and excused from giving any ac- "count of his future conduct to any man." But, if he continues to fill his seat in parliament, his conduct there he must expect to see a subject of public observation. Although the compliment I have quoted, is all he has received, or will obtain from Mr. Fox; notwithstanding the Court of Directors have been ungrateful, and the present ministry have taught Mr. Francis the practical lesson "take care of yourselves," notwithstanding he has had abundant cause of complaint, and has complained abundantly of the cause; yet, I will venture to tell him, that if he adheres to his avowed resolution of withdrawing "from the discussion

" of political questions, purely and properly " Indian, &c." he will forfeit the high character, which the impartial public has hitherto entertained of his principles and parliamentary conduct; that he will deface the favourable impressions created by his long active and meritorious life; and he will confirm, what his late murmurings have led us to suspect, (which an observation of Mr. Sheridan's has lately strengthened) that his political principles and labours, have been wholly directed to the objects of ambition and power; and that he has resolved to abandon the one, because he despairs of obtaining the other.—Mr. HUDDLESTONE is a member of parliament; an East India Director; and from a residence in India, has had the advantage of much local experience. His opinions as a legislator, respecting the Mahratta wars, have been delivered in the House, and have been committed to the press. He has pronounced, that the system of Lord Wellesley, " was fraught with se- " rious evils, teemed with dreadful hazard, " without any commensurate object; that " it set our life upon a cast; that it staked " our existence in India on the issue of pro- " jects and pursuits directly foreign to our " truest policy, and to the policy enjoined " by the legislature; on splendid schemes " and enterprises of which the failure would " be destruction, and even the success " ruinous; of which nothing was certain, " but the enormous expense of blood and " and treasure which it created, and the ha- " tred which it inspires."——" That there " appeared to have been engrafted on our " military successes in India, a scale of ex- " penditure to which no exhaustible reve- " nue was adequate;" and " that Lord " Wellesley's system in all its branches " should be abrogated." Such are the sentiments which Mr. Huddlestone has delivered in parliament; and in the dispatch, which the Court of Directors intended to have sent to India, (and which I shall particularly consider in a future letter) this gentleman, as a Director, has censured and condemned the conduct of Lord Wellesley, on many points connected with the details of his administration. In common with the other 22 directors, Mr. H. has accused Lord Wellesley, of wilful and positive disobedience of the orders of the directors, in several instances; which we all know is a misdemeanour. His lordship is also charged in the dispatch with a lavish and profuse expenditure of public money, at a period when he had drained the company's treasury in pursuing schemes of conquest; an expenditure as unlawful as it was unnecessary. Yet, Mr. Cobbett, we have not seen Mr. Huddlestone take any step to promote inquiry or censure against Lord Wellesley, whom he has blamed as a director, and condemned as a legislator, for persisting in a system, which was contrary to the policy enjoined by law; a system which placed in jeopardy the existence of our Indian empire. I forbear to observe particularly, on what has recently happened in parliament, respecting the *dispatch*, of which I have slightly spoken. We have yet to learn, what reason Mr. Huddlestone can give for suddenly changing his opinion of the propriety or necessity of producing this paper. We have, however, strong grounds to suspect the influence that occasioned this sudden change, and lament that Mr. H. could be so influenced.——The next person I shall notice on the score of consistency is MR. GEORGE JOHNSTONE, who has also acquired a considerable share of local knowledge in India; who has hitherto been sufficiently forward in all discussions connected with our Eastern governments; and who, if I am rightly informed, from *the result of practical experience*, can explain some of the transactions at Oude, so as to justify an assertion made by him in parliament, to which I shall presently refer.——In your Register of April the 12th, you have given to Mr. Johnstone, what Mr. Francis has never received, a *refresher*; and I shall rejoice if the recollection of it, shall serve as a *flapper* to his senses, when he shall be present at any future discussion of Indian subjects; and to assist his memory, I shall remind him, that in March, 1803, when the Indian Budget was brought before parliament, he declared, that no man could be found to say, that our increased dominion added to the security of our possessions or the stability of our empire; that no man would be hardy enough to deny that these acquisitions were made in defiance of the positive enactments of the legislature, and of the deliberate and recorded opinion of every eminent person, who had considered the nature of our empire in the East " As to the *manner* in which these acquisi- " tions had been made, upon a *deliberate* " *judgment*, he did not scruple to say, that " they were obtained by violations of na- " tional faith, and by deviations from jus- " tice, as flagrant as any of those, with " which we are accustomed to reproach the " French government." To reconcile the subsequent conduct of this gentleman, with the previous declaration, proceeding from his deliberate judgment, will be, I believe,

a more deliberate task, than even Mr. J. can perform.—Mr. Sheridan's *consistency* has been strongly pointed out in the extracts you have lately given to the public, in your Register of April 26th, from two speeches in parliament; the one made by Mr. Sheridan while he was in opposition; the other since he became a member of the present ministry. The *contrast* is most palpable; and I shall merely say, that any man capable of blushing, could never countenance such incongruous declarations; declarations which shew to France and to the world, that the national justice must wink at the perpetration of "acts, however flagrant and atro-"cious," rather than hazard the division of a ministry, composed of discordant but pliant principles!—I shall hereafter address you at length on the subject of Mr. Sheridan, and his connexion with the Carnatic question. I must now hasten to conclude this long letter with a few observations on Mr. Secretary Fox.—It will be in your recollection, that on the 5th of April, 1805, a long discussion took place in parliament, respecting the policy of the system which had been pursued in India by Lord Wellesley; and many of the observations made that day, by Mr. Fox, Mr. Francis, and Mr. Huddlestone, deserve to be recorded in letters of gold. "As soon "as we had destroyed Tippoo," said Mr. Fox, "it was then stated to be very desira-"ble to form a close connexion with the "Mahratta powers. This connexion we "soon formed with them, and we gave "them something like, what the French "used to term the "fraternal hug." We "embraced the Mahrattas, just as the "French embraced Holland. We, in fact, "seemed in India to be like Macbeth, "so "steeped in blood," that we thought it vain "to go back. "Sed revocare gradum, hic "labor, hoc opus est." "But, it is said, "that you waged war against the Mahrattas "merely from a fear of the French; and a "similar plea may be allowed with equal "justice, against any state in India, until "the work of destruction, the English "force may make its way to the wall of "of China. The pretence upon which the "advocates for conquests in India rested, "was precisely the pretence of all conquer-"ors and marauders in all ages. Accord-"ing to Livy, whenever the Romans made "war upon any state, it was only to secure "their own safety. Such was the plea ad-"vanced by Lewis the XIVth, and others "entertaining similar views. In the name "of common sense, he would ask where "such a plea was likely to stop? Where "was this resort for safety to end; for, ac-"cording as it was applied, no man was "likely to be at peace, for he could not cal-"culate upon any safety, while there was "another man alive who had strength "enough to knock him down." Mr. Fox concluded a long and eloquent speech, expressing a hope that "something declara-"tory of the proposed system with respect "to India, would be adopted by the House "as a guide to our governors in India, as a "rule by which our views might be judged "of by the natives." Such, Mr. Cobbett, *were* the sentiments delivered by Mr. Fox of Lord Wellesley's wars in India. Such *was* the opinion of Mr Fox, as to the necessity of declaring a system for the guidance of future governors, and for the satisfaction of the natives in India. Mr. Fox was, however, *then* in the list of *opposition*. Since Mr. Fox has become a minister, on two occasions he has been pressed to declare, what system of policy was likely to be followed by him and his colleagues, respecting the administration of India. He answered on one occasion, "that he did not feel the pro-"priety of calling upon ministers for any "distinct pledge, as to the course of policy "which they meant to follow with regard "to India." This declaration will, no doubt, enable the natives of India to judge of our views; and, it doubtless prescribes a most admirable rule for the guidance of our Eastern governors!—In about a month after Mr. Fox's speech, from which I have first quoted, Mr. Whitbread moved in parliament for the dismissal of Lord Melville from his Majesty's councils; and on that occasion, the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, with a feeling for that Noble Lord, of which he was not ashamed, and which nothing but the conviction of the opinion of parliament, and a sense of his public duty could possibly have overcome, endeavoured to prevail on Mr. Whitbread to withdraw his motion; stating, that "many gentlemen who con-"curred in the resolutions, (which had been "previously passed) thought that the wound "which had been inflicted should not be "aggravated by any unnecessary circum-"stances of severity; and, that when the "justice of the public was satisfied, the "feelings of the individual ought not to be "outraged." What said Mr. Fox to this humane doctrine? Did he then think, when *out of place*, as he has since declared, with respect to Lord Wellesley, "that, when a "bad system has prevailed, the best mode "of remedying it, is not by impeaching an "individual, but by removing the person

" who has carried on such a system, and to " take care that none such shall be carried " on in future?" No, Sir, Mr. Fox then said: " I trust that things will now be spee- " dily finished, however tardily they may " have been begun; that every measure " will be taken, that can afford security to " the people; not by *making legislative* " *provisions, for the future,* for these *may* " *be disregarded, as they have been already;* " but by inflicting proper *punishment,* " where it has been deserved." Sentiments similar to those, did Mr. Fox also avow, when the censure of Lord Melville was moved; and it was urged, " that the persons " *had* been removed who had carried on the " bad system. It is said that these abuses " can never occur again. No; it shall not " be done for the future, says Mr. Trotter. " The act can never be violated again.—I " hope not; I hope the decision of the " House will render it impossible for the " gentleman who at present holds the si- " tuation of Treasurer for the Navy, or for " any future treasurer ever to violate it. " But if we do not come to this decision, " what security have we that some future " Melvilles or Trotters will not break " through any new act we may pass, in the " same way in which they have done the " resolutions of the House in 1782, and the " act of the 25th of the King founded on " them. I hope and trust, Sir, that a large " and virtuous majority of the House will " be found to put the seal and stamp of " their reprobation upon such monstrous " and unblushing delinquency." Now, Mr. Cobbett, if a large and virtuous majority of the ministers and of the House of Commons, does not promote an inquiry into the measures of Lord Wellesley's administration in India, and the reasons for pursuing a system, which has been declared ruinous and unjust, and which has left us " steeped in " blood;" and, if " proper punishment is " not inflicted where it has been deserved," what *security* have we, that some future governor general will not break through any new act that may pass? And, if Mr. Fox does not avow and practice *now* the principles, so declared, when the criminality of Lord Melville was in question, I hope and trust, that a large and virtuous majority of the nation will be found to put the seal and stamp of their reprobation upon such monstrous and unblushing inconsistency.—One word more to Mr. Fox and Lord Henry Petty. In the debate, to which I have last alluded, Mr. Fox took occasion to call the attention of every man in the House capable of appreciating virtue and genius, to the brilliant efforts, made that night by Lord Henry Petty. " I recollect," said Mr. Fox, " when Mr. Pitt made his first essay in this " house. I recollect the just pride which " we all felt to see him, much at the same " age then that the Noble Lord now is, " distinguishing himself in *hunting* down " corruption; in unmasking abuses in the " public expenditure; in proposing and en- " forcing reforms of various kinds. What " a *contrast* does his conduct on this night " afford! Under what sort of figure does he " appear?" *Heu! quantum mutatus ab illo!* Now, if Mr. Fox is capable of feeling the force of the reproach which he exultingly directed against Mr. Pitt, on that occasion, let him reflect on the *contrast* which his own political conduct has afforded, and, I doubt whether he is yet so callous, but a sting may find its way to his bosom. Let Lord Henry Petty also recollect, that the praise of Mr. Fox, if undeserved, will ill become his present character, and to pursue the figure of his friend, the *game* of corruption is not yet up, nor is the *hunting* season over.—A. I.—*May 7,* 1806.

COLONIAL SERVICE.

(*Continued from p.* 672.)

IV. That the officers should be gentlemen who had already served the King, or East-India Company in India; or others who had resided in that country. ——V. That they should be embarked in ships commanded by masters and officers acquainted, in some degree, with their language, customs, and prejudices, from having traded from port to port in India; and manned with crews of Lascars.—VI. That the transports should not be allowed to carry any thing but stores and provisions for the voyage. All merchandize should be confiscated on the discovery of it, and the captain subjected to heavy penalties, on proof that he had taken or permitted any to be taken on board. Possibly, however, an exception to this rule might be allowed with respect to rice, and some other articles of provision, and lumber useful to the islands, and which cannot be supplied from the mother country, and can be sent from Bengal, I believe, at a cheaper rate than even from America.——VII. That in addition to the Seapoy infantry establishment proposed, it would be highly desirable and advantageous to have several companies of that truly useful class of people denominated Artillery Lascars and Golandaze.—The transports for

the service could be procured in India, at an easy freight, and can be furnished with provisions from Bengal, at a cheaper rate than from any country in the world. After the debarkation of the troops, they may be loaded with sugar, or other West-India produce for Europe. Or, might they not, in the first instance, be more usefully freighted with the Negro regiments (not very favourably looked upon by the planters) as their returning cargoes to Ceylon, or to other parts of India, where they would prove an acceptable addition to our force? At all events, whether or not, it might be determined to leave the West-Indian regiments at their present stations, the admixture of Indian troops with them (I mean in separate corps) would tend to neutralise any bad qualities dreaded in the African corps.—Should some such plan, as above suggested, be adopted, it will be highly necessary to secure to the natives of India the justice due to freemen, which they ever have been in their own country.—On the shores of the Mediterranean, and, generally in all warmer climates, I am persuaded that our Eastern troops, with a proportion of Europeans, would be found equal to any service required of them; and that there are few officers accustomed to them, who would hesitate to oppose a force, so constituted, to an equal number of Spaniards, Portuguese, or Italians, with any doubt of the event.——Our Eastern troops might be employed against Spanish America, the States of Barbary, &c. &c. and some regiments, I should even imagine might, for a time, be sent to Gibraltar and Malta, and thereby release a part of their garrisons for other services. On those services a part of the regular establishments of India might be employed, as they would only be of a temporary nature; but, for the service of the West-India islands, I repeat it as absolutely necessary, that *distinct corps should be raised, for the express purpose, and under due precautions.*—To support our empire in India, a strong band of our countrymen must be allotted. But, I am persuaded that in return she could afford very numerous bodies, from her immense population, to act in conjunction with portions of our own native troops, for the protection of our colonies, and to serve with them in all warm climates, in which I especially include the countries bordering upon the Mediterranean Sea. In supplying the West Indies alone, I verily believe such an arrangement might be made, as would save the lives of as many of our countrymen, as must be destined to the support of our empire in the East.——In your Register of the 15th of December, 1804, you prophetically declare, that "there exists "no well founded hope, that in the course "of this war we shall derive any advantage "from continental co-operation, unless we "put ourselves in a situation to take a commanding part in a continental war, by providing such an army, as shall at once convince those, whose alliance we desire, of "the sincerity of our views." Let the present ministry put an end to the warfare in India, and seriously turn their attention of the employment of a part of the resources to that great empire, in aid of our domestic wants; and then, if our colonial demands for British soldiers can be diminished, and assistance given to our efforts in some other quarters, the army you desire will, at least, be more easily obtained. Thirty thousand veteran Seapoys, with a couple of regiments of Hindostanny cavalry, sent to Egypt, strengthened by eight or ten thousand British troops, already in the Mediterranean, would form one continental army, respectable in that position, whose threatening aspect might not vainly be directed towards Spain, Italy, and the States of Barbary, whose respect for us seems on the decline, or might be employed to support, if necessary, the tottering fabric of the Turkish empire in Egypt, or in other parts of it. All great conquerors have had recourse to the conquered, in maintaining and enlarging their dominions. Would we preserve or extend ours, we should follow their example.—To conclude, it must be allowed wherever our Eastern troops can be properly employed, they will materially economise the valuable lives of our own countrymen, and enable us to shew a more extended front to our enemies, on whom none of us, I trust, will ever feel disposed to turn our backs. The projects of the French have been gigantic and successful beyond the bounds of calculation. Let us oppose them with a spirit equally undaunted and surprising. "Fortes fortuna juvat."

I am, Sir,
your most obedient,
humble servant,
TAMERLANE.

April, 1806.

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